

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, 25, and 31 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1, 4 and 31 have been amended to more clearly define the invention and claims 2, 9-24, and 26-30 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 5-8, 25, and 31 are independent.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that claims 3, 5-8, and 25 are allowed and that claims 2, 4, and 31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. This Amendment cancels claim 2 and amends claim 1 to incorporate the features of canceled claim 2, amends claim 4 to depend from claim 1, and cancels claims 2, 9-24, 26-30 to place this application into condition for allowance.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicant also notes that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3-8, 25, and 31, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

09/839,298

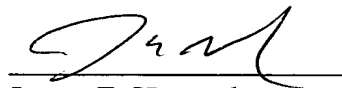
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DOCKET NO. NEC01P030-HSc

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 11/20/03



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